



CONTEMPORARY IMAGES IN PRINT SINCE 1915

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Robert Asman: Silver Mine – A Retrospective
December 16, 2011 – March 31, 2012
Friday, December 16: Reception 5:30-7:30pm

PHILADELPHIA: *Robert Asman: Silver Mine* is a retrospective exhibition of an exceptional photographic career characterized by idiosyncratic experimentation with the bounds of black and white photography. **Robert Asman** is one of the most important photographers of his generation. For most of the last thirty-five years Asman (Asheville, NC) has been devoted to investigating and stretching the conceptual and technical boundaries of silver prints, through extended, and related, explorations of the human figure and the urban landscape. His masterful manipulation of chemistry and paper negatives has resulted in a seemingly boundless and wondrous body of work. Asman approaches art making as a transformative process, in which he mines the physical properties of his materials to create a work on paper which are seemingly the result of alchemical change. Process and image are completely merged, and result in images ranging from the sublimely beautiful to the fetishized or the startlingly violent, though often conveying an ironic humor. The Print Center is pleased to present this exhibition at a critical moment for examining process driven work, as the integration of digital technologies into art making are causing artists to revisit traditional photographic processes.

Robert Asman was born in Washington, D.C. He received a BA from Catholic University, Washington, D.C. in 1973 and an MFA from the renowned photography program at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY in 1975. After a brief return to Washington, Asman lived for thirty years in Philadelphia where he taught photography at Drexel University, University of the Arts and University of Pennsylvania, in addition to working as a fine art photographer and a running a commercial black and white printing lab. His career has been marked by several honors, including a Pew Fellowship in the Arts and a Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. His work has been exhibited internationally in many solo and group exhibitions including at the ICA, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; West Chester University, West Chester, PA; Galerie Paviot, Paris; National Museum of Art, Bucharest, Romania; Robert Klein Gallery, Boston, MA; Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, Wilmington, DE; Paul Cava Gallery, Philadelphia; and The Print Center. Asman's work is found in numerous permanent collections, including Arcadia University, Glenside, PA; Haverford College, Haverford, PA; Free Library of Philadelphia; George Eastman House, Rochester, NY; Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C. and The State Museum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, PA.

The exhibition is curated by **Elizabeth Spungen**, the Executive Director of The Print Center. In her five year tenure at The Print Center, Spungen has also curated exhibitions of the work of Doug and Mike Starn (2007) and Masao Yamamoto (2008).

The exhibition will take place December 16, 2011 – March 31, 2012 and will be complemented by a series of special events, including a gallery talk by the artist at 5:30pm on December 16. In spring 2012, Asman will deliver a lecture on his career and a panel discussion on the relevance of sexually imagery in contemporary photography will be convened. In conjunction with the exhibition, The Print Center is preparing a monograph on Asman, featuring an introduction by the curator, an essay placing the work in historical context by Nancy Brokaw, an essay critically assessing the content of the work by Ryan Widger, poetic text by Brian Teare and annotations to the images by Asman, to be published in summer 2012.

The Print Center supports printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts and encourages the appreciation of the printed image in all its forms. The Print Center presents a variety of programs for the public including exhibitions; The Print Center Gallery Store, which offers the largest and most diverse selection of contemporary prints in Philadelphia; the longest running annual international competition for prints and photographs in the country; and an extensive series of education programs and special events.

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